2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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not likely to occur at the present time; in fact, they belong to the golden age of the distant past. In addition, a few tales are popularly told, not for their wealth of interesting detail, but as historical incidents. Some of these contain exaggerations that verge on mythology, whereas others, especially those dealing with certain individuals not long deceased, have clearly a foundation of truth. The themes include tales of travel, hunting exploits, the experiences of criminals, and varied subjects.

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173

THE WIFE WHO WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE

539*

This story describes the adventures of a Bella Coola woman, daughter of a chief named *Tsukwum*, who was married to a Bella Bella chief. The latter's father sold her as a slave to *Trahse*, a Kitkatla chief and ancestor of the chief with the same name who was so feared by the Bella Coola. This was, of course, contrary to all established custom. *Trahse* carried the woman away to Kitkatla, whence there seemed little hope for her return.

Trahse owned a number of crabapple trees at Kitlobe which he visited every autumn to collect and preserve the fruit. The woman had been with him for some time when he went as usual for the ripe apples. Members of different tribes can be distinguished by their different physique and a Kitlobe, recognizing that the woman was a Bella Coola, asked her how she came to be with *Trahse*. She told him how she had been sold, disgracefully, and he promised to help her return home. Telling her to conceal her plans, he bade her to be ready to flee early the following morning. At the appointed time he appeared, bringing dried clothes, grease, moccasins, and other equipment, wrapped in a seal's stomach. He sketched on the ground the overland route to Kimsquit, telling her how many affluents of the Kitlobe River she must pass before she, leaving one to the south, thence across the divide, and down the Kimsquit River.

[144]

The woman started out, but after several days of travel realized that she had passed the place where she should turn south, and was lost. In point of fact, she was at this time near Owen Lake. She headed back in the hope of recovering her trail, but snow fell and she could go no farther; to make matters worse she had consumed all her clothes, and most of the grease. The unfortunate woman sought shelter under a big tree, where in time she was completely covered with snow. Every day she ate a small

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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CHAPTER VI

THE MAN HIMSELF

Physique — Character

Physique

142 144 IN central British Columbia there are two types of Indian; one represented by the Carriers and Chilkotin of the interior, the other, by the coastal peoples. The first are relatively slight of build with graceful carriage, and thin, rather delicate-featured faces. The younger people, particularly, are lithe and handsome, resembling bronze statues. On the other hand, individuals of the second type are characterized by stocky, heavy physique, with thick-set, powerful bodies, muscular arms and legs; their faces have wide mouths and prominent cheek-bones and noses (see Plate 13). Undoubtedly the Bella Coola belong with these latter.[1] No measurements were taken to substantiate this statement, but the general affinities of the tribe are obvious. Stature, build, physiognomy, and especially that intangible impression of heaviness, unite to demonstrate even to one with slight knowledge of British Columbia Indians that he is dealing with a people who are predominantly of the coastal type. Of course there are individuals of the interior type, but they are decidedly in the minority (see Plates 14 and 15). The Bella Coola claim that they can [829] distinguish a coastal man from one of the interior people, and that every coastal tribe has its own peculiarities sufficiently marked to be recognizable on sight. Probably no white observer can make this fine distinction, though the difference between the two main types is clearly apparent.

142 145 Judged by white standards the Bella Coola are far from prepossessing in appearance. Even the children are plain and stolid, with little if any of the grace and appeal of childhood.

[1] Cf. Boas, p. 36.

2;McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

As they grow older the plainness of feature is more pronounced, accompanied by increasing heaviness of body (see Plate 16). Many of the adults are corpulent and move with slow, awkward gait. As a rule the men have great strength and are capable of prolonged and arduous exertion, particularly in paddling; in fact, constant use of canoes may have developed this powerful, ungainly build. Few are good walkers or packers; such, if they are found, usually belong to the lighter interior type. Among the grown people the face, though unbeautiful, often has a kindly expression, even becoming attractive in laughter or when a friendly grin spreads from ear to ear. With advancing age the prominent nose seems to grow larger, frequently becoming almost aquiline (see Plate 17). Many of the older people assert that this was even more common in former times. In time the face becomes lined with wrinkles and the body appears to shrink (see Plate 18). The teeth are in many cases worn down to the gums; this seems to cause no discomfort though an old person cannot utter the glottal stops and velar sounds with which the language abounds without emitting a fine spray of saliva. They are absolutely unable to pronounce several of the Bella Coola words, while the constant spitting is a disagreeable feature of their conversation, particularly to an investigator striving, often vainly, to record sounds accurately. The deep wrinkles of old women give them a benign "grandmotherly" expression, which makes them more attractive in extreme age than in youth (see Plate 19). Senile decay is so frequent that the return to infancy in mind as well as in physical powers is regarded as normal.

Among the coastal tribes hair on the face is not uncommon, but in this characteristic the Bella Coola are pre-eminent. Nearly all the men have sparse moustaches, at least; many have a heavy growth, and several are full-bearded. That this was due to white mixture was assumed at first, but no evidence could be found to support this view. There are a number of half-breeds in the community but they are no more hirsute than the full-blooded Indians. Razors are now almost univer-

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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142 sally used but the older people state that beards were by no
144 means rare in former times. Careful inquiries were made
[302] concerning the ancestry of a man, about seventy years of age in 1922, whose curly beard suggests that he must be a half-breed, as indeed he is assumed to be by the white settlers of the valley. His father was *Pothe*, the most influential chief of recent years, his mother was herself the daughter of an important chief. None of the older men had ever heard the slightest rumour of faithlessness on her part. There were white
[648] traders on the coast at the time of his birth, and intercourse with
[567] slave women and others of low family was not uncommon, but
[622] it would have been difficult for a chief's wife to miscondurt herself, and still more difficult for her to conceal all knowledge of it in view of the open life which prevailed at that period. Moreover, it is said that *Pothe* himself had a similar beard, as did also the parents of several men who in 1922 were fifty or sixty years of age.

142 Although the possibility of white mixture cannot be over-
144 looked in the case of this one individual, one must not dis-
[302] regard the opinion of the people themselves on hairiness in general. They are proud of it and regard beards and mustaches as marks of virility given to them by *Alquntam*; baldness and lack of facial hair are considered a sign of weakness. They aver that their fathers and grandfathers were even more hirsute than they. Furthermore, they point out with pride
[184] that this is a difference between themselves and the tribes of the interior, who are, as they say in scorn, "hairless like Chinamen." Finally, it is noteworthy that the hair on the head of many Bella Coola is wavy, or even curly (see Plate 101), instead of straight as among the majority of Indian tribes.[1]

Character

181 It is an almost impossible task to describe briefly the characteristics of a people. Those of the Bella Coola have

[1] This characteristic has led the writer to wonder if it could possibly have been caused by Jews mixture.

[illegible]

I.

The Bella Coola are a small tribe inhabiting the coasts of Dean Inlet and Bentinck Arm, two long and narrow fiords situated in about 52° north, in British Columbia. Their habitat extends along Bella Coola River, which empties into North Bentinck Arm. The name "Bella Coola" is a corruption of the word "Bilkula," by which name the tribe is known to the Kwakiutl. There is no term in their own language embracing all the tribes speaking the Bella Coola language. It seems that at a former time the tribe was quite populous; but, owing to various epidemics and the introduction of other diseases, its numbers have dwindled down, so that at the present time it has been reduced to only a few hundred souls. The language spoken by the tribe belongs to the Salishan family, more particularly to the group of dialects spoken along the coasts of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. The great similarity between the Bella Coola and the other Coast-Salishan dialects leads me to assume that at one time the tribes speaking these dialects inhabited contiguous areas. At the present time the Bella Coola are separated from other tribes speaking Salishan languages by a considerable stretch of country, which is inhabited by tribes of Athapascan and Kwakiutl lineage. Vocabulary and grammar have been highly modified, particularly by an extensive admixture of words. The structure of their language in the other dialects of the Coast Salish is similar to that of the Tillamook, another language belonging to the Salishan family, which is spoken on the coast of Oregon, to an area separated from the rest of the Salishan territory by the district inhabited by the Chinook.

Physically the Bella Coola have evidences of long-continued contact with the southern Coast tribes, and also with the Athapascan tribes of the interior. Evidently intermarriages have been quite frequent, so much so that their present physical appearance differs considerably from that of the southern Salishan tribes, of whom they form a branch. The same is true in regard to their customs and beliefs, which differ fundamentally from those of the southern Salishan tribes.

In the present paper I shall describe the mythology of the Bella Coola, and discuss its development.

II.

Our previous knowledge of the mythology of this tribe is based on studies made by Allison Jacobsen, Philip Jacobsen, Godfrey, and the writer. In 1885 I published a few brief notes on their traditions. Godfrey pub-

[illegible]

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inhibited by Salish tribes refer to the early separation of the Bella Coola tribe from the related tribes of the Gulf of Georgia, and that in their traditions they have retained the memory of the emigration of part of the tribe from the southern territory. It seems also probable that the allusion to the origin of one family of the tribe on Skeena River refers to a mixture with the tribes inhabiting northern British Columbia.

The traditions of the tribes also describe the style of house used by the ancestors of certain village communities; and it is interesting to note that some of these houses correspond to the subterranean lodges that were in use among the Chilcotin, while others correspond to the types that were in use among the Carriers. It is said that the ancestor of the Nuxalk'in used the subterranean lodge which is called tsi'pa (see p. 83), while the ancestor of the Nang'a'lut used the skin lodge which is called skoo (see p. 141).

Since the Bella Coola retain the fundamental traits of the social organization of their congeners in the south, and since their traditions bear evidence of an emigration from that region, and since, furthermore, the linguistic evidence proves that the Bella Coola and the Coast Salish at one time inhabited contiguous areas on the coast, we are justified in assuming that the general culture of the Bella Coola at the time of their emigration must have resembled that of the Coast Salish. The question then arises, How did the peculiar endogamic system and the remarkable mythology of the Bella Coola originate from the much simpler forms that we find among the Coast Salish?

One of the most remarkable features in the inner life of the tribes of the northern coast of British Columbia is the great importance of the clan legend, which is considered one of the most valuable properties of each clan or family. It is carefully guarded in the same way as material property, and an attempt on the part of a person not a member of the clan to tell the tradition as his own is considered one of the gravest offences against property rights. The possession of a clan tradition is felt by the Indians to be one of the most important prerogatives. When, therefore, the Bella Coola settled on Bella Coola River, and were thrown into contact with the northern Coast tribes, the lack of a well-developed clan tradition must have been felt as a serious drawback. The physical appearance of the Bella Coola proves that at one time they must have intermarried to a great extent with the Bella Bella. Through these marriages the peculiar customs of the Coast tribes were first introduced among them. This is shown by the fact that a great many of the mythological names can be proved to be of Kwakiutl origin, of which stock the Bella Bella are a branch. Thus the name for their original deity, [illegible] is a Kwakiutl word, [illegible] may be translated as "the wealthiest one." The great frequency of